

RELOCATION, HOUSING AND SHELTER RESOURCES FOR VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER VIOLENT CRIMES

A variety of housing, shelter or relocation resources are available to victims of violent crime in California. In addition to relocation or other victim assistance available from the state, victims can also seek assistance from local agencies, nonprofit and community-based organizations.

The needs of every crime victim are unique, and the availability of assistance varies from community to community. Victim-Witness Assistance Centers are located in every California county, and crime victim advocates at these centers can help guide victims and connect them with local resources.

Following is a brief look at some of the resources that may be available.

California Victim Compensation Program Reimbursement for Relocation Expenses

The California Victim Compensation Program (VCP) can provide qualifying victims of violent crime up to \$2,000 per household for expenses relating to relocation. The expenses must be determined by law enforcement to be necessary for the personal safety of the victim, or by a licensed mental health provider to be necessary for the emotional well-being of the victim.

Only one victim per crime can receive reimbursement for relocation expenses, but the program may authorize more than one relocation per crime, if necessary for the physical safety or emotional well-being of the victim. However, any subsequent relocation must be within three years of the initial crime and total expenses for all relocations cannot exceed \$2,000. A victim can receive reimbursement for relocation expenses related to another crime, if the crime occurred more than three years after the prior crime for which relocation benefits were paid, and the crime does not involve the same offender.

When the relocation is for a victim of sexual assault or domestic violence, and the identity of the offender is known to the victim, the victim shall agree not to inform the offender of the location of the victim's new residence and not allow the offender on the premises at any time, or the victim shall agree to seek a restraining order against the offender.

Contact a local Victim-Witness Assistance Center or the California VCP toll free at (800) 777-9229 for more details on relocation benefits. Victims will be provided with a relocation packet that includes an expense worksheet, verification forms, and a Victim Compensation Program rental agreement.

Compensation is Only One Part of an Effective Relocation Strategy for Victims

Victim Compensation Program assistance is just one part of a comprehensive strategy for recovering from victimization and preventing re-victimization. Victims need to consider a number of additional resources and tips to ensure their safety and security, including the accompanying "Safety Tips."

Additional Relocation Resources

Federal Housing Choice Vouchers Program

The Housing Choice Vouchers Program is the federal government's program for assisting very low-income participants with housing. The vouchers are administered locally by public housing agencies (PHA). The PHA pays a housing subsidy directly to the landlord on behalf of the participating family. The California Victim Compensation Program can reimburse a crime victim for expenses related to a deposit for voucher housing. For more information, contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development at **800-955-2232** or visit **www.hud.gov**.

http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet.cfm

Local Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Resources, Including Emergency Shelter Programs

Victims of sexual assault and domestic violence can seek assistance and the shelter of temporary emergency housing, and a variety of other assistance, through sexual assault or domestic violence resources in their local community. For more information, contact the National Domestic Violence hotline at **800-799-SAFE** or visit the California Department of Public Health's, Safe Network website at **www.safenetwork.net**.

<http://www.safenetwork.net/AgencyList.aspx>

Local County Social Services Offices

Local county social services offices can put victims in touch with financial, medical, housing and other social service assistance. For a listing of county social service offices, visit **www.dhcs.ca.gov**.

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medi-cal/Pages/CountyOffices.aspx>

Local Continuum of Care Coordinators for Homeless Assistance

Assistance is available to victims who need help with relocation and housing. Many counties in California have Continuum of Care Coordinators who coordinate homeless assistance. For a listing of Continuum of Care Coordinators, visit **www.hud.gov**.

<http://www.hud.gov/local/ca/homeless/continuumcare.cfm>

Local California Homeless Service Organizations

For a statewide directory of California homeless service organizations, visit **www.nationalhomeless.org**.

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/resources/local/california.html>

California Homeless Veterans Assistance Organizations

Several organizations provide veterans with assistance in obtaining emergency and supportive housing, food, healthcare services, job training, and placement assistance. For a statewide directory of California homeless veterans' assistance organizations, visit **www.nchv.org**.

http://www.nchv.org/network_by_state.cfm?State=CA&Display=California

Safety Tips for Crime Victims Who Are Relocating

- ✓ Get an unlisted phone number and caller ID.
- ✓ Log any threatening calls and report them to police.
- ✓ Be cautious in providing personal information, such as your address and phone number, to others.
- ✓ Install motion sensitive lights.
- ✓ Install solid core doors with secure deadbolt locks.
- ✓ If all keys are not accounted for, change locks.
- ✓ Keep a list of critical contact numbers and locations (law enforcement, attorney, medical care, domestic violence shelter, etc.)
- ✓ Securely keep a small packed suitcase along with your driver's license, social security card, birth certificate, passport and medications.
- ✓ Tell trusted friends, neighbors and/or coworkers about the situation.
- ✓ Give them a description of the suspect and the vehicle they may be driving.
- ✓ Ask coworkers to screen all calls and visitors.
- ✓ Vary travel routes to work, stores and social engagements.
- ✓ Try to stay in public areas.
- ✓ Avoid traveling alone.

Mail Forwarding Through the Safe at Home Program

The California Secretary of State's Office administers Safe at Home, a confidential mail-forwarding program. Victims of domestic violence, stalking or sexual assault are provided a substitute address in place of their real home address. For more information, call **877-322-5227** or visit **www.sos.ca.gov/safeathome**.

<http://www.sos.ca.gov/safeathome/>

Additional Safety Information

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence **www.ncadv.org**.

http://www.ncadv.org/protectyourself/SafetyPlan_130.html

National Domestic Violence Hotline **800-799-SAFE** or **www.ndvh.org**.

<http://www.ndvh.org/help/planning.html>

National Center for Victims of Crime **800-FYI-CALL** or **www.ncvc.org**.

<http://www.ncvc.org/ncvc/main.aspx?dbName=DocumentViewer&DocumentID=32460>